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STATE FOR ISN, IO, NEA AND EAP

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SUBJECT: MALAYSIA'S POSITION ON IRAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM  
UNCHANGED BY IAEA REPORT

REF: STATE 23001

Classified By: Political Section Chief Mark D. Clark for reasons 1.4 (b and d).

11. (C) Malaysia's position on Iran's nuclear program remains unchanged following the latest IAEA report, the Foreign Ministry's Under Secretary for Multilateral Political Affairs Shahrul Ikram told polchief February 28 in response to reftel demarche. Shahrul avoided the issue of Iranian non-compliance with UNSCR 1737. Instead, he restated Malaysia's support for Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes, and opposition to any country acquiring nuclear weapons. Malaysia continues to be very careful in its public comments so that these follow the Non-Aligned Movement's statement from the 2006 NAM Summit in Havana. When we asked about any outcome from a Malaysian ambassador's participation in a recent tour of Iranian nuclear facilities, Shahrul referred to the statement made by the Cuban envoy directed to the IAEA, in which the diplomats who visited Iran supported negotiations between Iran and UNSC members.

12. (C) Shahrul added that at this juncture Malaysia did not see a role for itself in the debate over Iran's nuclear program as this was being taken up only among UNSC members, although Malaysia clearly favored negotiations over confrontation. Malaysia did not intend to wade into the arguments between the UNSC and Iran. "We are not directly involved" in finding a solution, Shahrul said. He commented that Malaysian leaders did not believe Iran would buckle under increased international pressure and thought Teheran would refuse to enter into negotiations if these were subject to pre-conditions.

13. (U) In a clear reference to the Iran situation, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak, speaking in Saudi Arabia February 27, called for disputes over nuclear issues to be handled through "negotiations and discussions, rather than military means," according to the Malaysian state news agency.

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